



NOTES FROM THE:

Air Force Accounting and Finance Office

by Colonel Martha M. Beatty

Second Worldwide FSO Workshop Hailed a Success. From 2-6 April 2001 over 200 FSOs, superintendents, and ALO chiefs descended on Denver for the second worldwide FSO workshop. The workshop, co-hosted by the AFAFO, DFAS, and MAJCOM FMs and functional managers, provided attendees insight into the many issues confronting today's financial services officers. While you can check out the AFAFO web site for copies of briefing slides located under 2001 FSO Conference, here are a few highlights:

Keynote Luncheon Speakers. On day one of the conference, we were fortunate to have Mr Ron Speer, acting SAF/FM, as our keynote speaker. Mr Speer focused on the FM strategic plan, CFO status, and professional development as it pertained to the FSOs. As I have traveled throughout the commands, a common question is, *With all the innovations, will we have a need for FSOs in the future?* Mr Speer addressed this with his review of the SAF/FM Strategic Plan and Goals. Of the seven stated goals, six directly focus on FSO responsibilities and people.

- Improve readiness to support deployed ops
- Excel by building a financial career field that attracts, develops, and retains talented people
- Improve budget formulation and execution
- Provide better cost, economic, and financial info
- Improve financial accountability
- Improve/integrate business practices to better support the Air Force mission
- Organize and communicate effectively

In addition, Mr Speer spoke of the importance of the FSO in achieving auditable financial statements under CFO. The tri-annual, falling directly under the FSO, is key to attaining an unqualified opinion. SAF/FMs goal is to gain a clean opinion on the FY01 Statement of Budgetary Resources. The next step in attaining CFO compliance is fixing financial systems. The third step is to achieve an unqualified opinion

for the FY03 financial statements. Getting there will take everyone's help.

Under the area of professional development, Mr Speer indicated that this was a **Top Priority** in FM and stressed the need for FM professionals to seek education, professional military education, experience, and continuing education opportunities. In addition, test based certification (CDFM, CPA, CGFM, etc.) will become more important, both to satisfy Congressional requirements for a professional work force and promotion opportunities within DoD.

On day two, Mr Tom Bloom, Director of DFAS, added his expertise and insight for our FSOs. Mr Bloom expanded on DFAS's mission to *provide responsive, professional finance and accounting services to the Department of Defense*. This winter marked DFAS's 10th anniversary. Since then, DFAS has gone through tremendous changes to become more efficient, to move from legacy to migratory systems, and to become a *world-class provider* of accounting and finance services. Under the DFAS Business Evolution, Mr Bloom has installed Senior Service Executive (SES) leaders to take responsibility and accountability of the major business lines. Under *People Pay*, Mr Steve Turner provides support for military and civilian pay as well as travel pay support. Ms JoAnn Boutelle is responsible for all Commercial Payments from IMPAC card micro-purchases to the research and development of the Joint Strike Fighter program. Mr Zack Gaddy, the DFAS Denver Director, wears two hats as the client executive for the Air Force and the Accounting Business Line Manager for the Air Force. Mr Bloom's powerful presentation included a short film clip of military warriors in action. He underscored DFAS's commitment to customer service to our commanders and our troops.

On the final day of the conference our FSOs shared the luncheon with the Mile High Chapter of ASMC. Our keynote speaker was Colonel Sandra Gregory, Comptroller, Air Force Space Command. Col Gregory provided the attendees a dynamic briefing with discussions on Air Force Space Command and the Space Commission's January 2001 report. Describing rockets as the *space runways* Col Gregory showed the audience how Air Force Space locations scanned

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the globe with assets as far away as 20,000 miles into space. Her discussion on the Space Commission, chaired by the Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld (now SecDef), described how Space has become a top national security priority. In addition, she discussed how administration of Space must meet the National Security Space needs of the 21st century, and how DoD must use Space assets as a medium in conflict. Space, the *Financial Frontier*, will expand FM roles and responsibilities for those who cost the equipment to those who budget and account for the billions of dollars the program will require over the next decade. The opportunities are as unlimited as space itself for the professional FSO and DFAS members attending the luncheon.

While each of our speakers brought a different perspective of Financial Management to the audience, a central theme ran through each presentation. The need for partnering, for working together, is critical to the success of our FSO professionals and accomplishment of their mission. This year's conference brought together 250 professionals who had a chance to increase their professional expertise as well as make professional relationships with today's FSOs and tomorrow's FM leaders. For more information, on the conference and FM professional development, visit the SAF/FM web site.



Professional Military Comptroller School (Continued From Page 27)

nology, industry practices, Congressional actions, and any news impacting your Service. Prepare to be a visionary.

Being a visionary will only get you part of the way home. If you are unable or incapable of reacting in the appropriate fashion to the changes you foresee, the vision will only afford you the opportunity to see the freight train before it hits you. Not a pleasant thought. Cotton farmers saw a way to cut costs and improve their yield by using machines to harvest their crops. Further innovation led to shorter hybrids of cotton making machine harvesting easier and even more efficient. Thankfully, *cotton pickers* such as myself were put out of business. As I observed PMCS students adapt to schedule changes, an academic environment, other students, and multiple projects I could only image how effective they would be back in their normal work environment. Maybe familiarity with issues at the home station even enhances their performance, but the new environment certainly shows stress fractures quickly for some. Although a lot of the academic environment is artificial it makes a great laboratory for self-assessment and improvement. When you approach PMCS or any other professional growth challenge see them as an opportunity to stretch yourself and become more flexible and multi-dimensional as a financial manager.

The first step is to seek opportunities. You are ultimately responsibility for your own professional growth. While you're setting your personal goals make PMCS attendance a high priority. The school is supported by an excellent and experienced staff and supplemented by 65 to 70 outstanding guest lectures from across DoD. If you don't learn something you're not trying. Additionally, if you have the opportunity to become a PMCS instructor, jump at it! After hearing 312 student briefings and numerous guest lectures, and reading over 140 student papers my well of knowledge and information was filled many times over. It has been truly a fun, creative, learning, and rewarding experience.

I hope sharing my observations from the past two years might in some way inspire you to continue to seek self-improvement. Develop a personal and professional vision to the future. Remember this will require you to stretch and be flexible with your changing environment. I know six weeks is a long time to be away at a course, but attendance at PMCS will add a new dimension to your professional growth and will be well worth your efforts. Most importantly don't forget to share your knowledge and experience with others. We all occasionally find ourselves back in the *tall cotton*, but hopefully your preparations will help you find your way



Financial Management Career Program (Continued From Page 29)

for the new Financial Management Certifications are FM1, FM2, and FM3 for the three respective certification levels. No Total Person Score points are associated with the certification levels. However, supervisors are strongly encouraged to take Financial Management Level certifications as an indication of a person's professionalism and initiative. Consideration will be given to certification levels when making selections for promotions and other personnel actions.

